

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /124 W

----- 010098

R 181200Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 151

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 2613

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CE

SUBJ: MRS BANDARANAIKE BANS USE OF MEETING GROUNDS FOR OPPOSITION
DEMONSTRATION

1. CITING LIKELY THREATS TO LAW AND ORDER PRIME MINISTER
BANDARANAIKE HAS BANNED USE OF GALLE FACE GREEN IN COLOMBO AS
RALLYING POINT FOR OPPOSITION-LED SATYAGRAHA PLANNED FOR OCT
19. PM'S STATEMENT CLAIMED THAT OPPOSITION UNITED NATIONAL
PARTY (UNP) BENT ON DISRUPTING GOVT PLANS TO SOLVE FOOD
CRISIS AND THAT SATYAGRAHA DEMONSTRATION WAS TO BE MARKED BY
VIOLENCE AND DISORDER. ANNOUNCEMENT OF BAN CAME ONLY HOURS AFTER
RELEASE OF PUBLIC LETTER BY PM TO UNP LEADER J.R. JAYEWARDENE
ACKNOWLEDGING WITHOUT OBJECTION J.R.'S PLANS FOR USE OF PUBLIC
GROUNDS.

2. MAIN QUESTION NOW CENTERS ON UNP REACTION TO BAN AND BASICALLY
ON WETHER PARTY WILL OPENLY DEFY GOVT FOR FIRST TIME SINCE
1970. WHILE UNP OBVIOUSLY BUOYED BY POPULAR RESPONSE TO
MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN OF PAST SEVERAL WEEKS THERE IS LITTLE TO
INDICATE THAT IT PREPARED AT THIS TIME FOR CONFRONTATION.
JAYEWARDENE REPORTEDLY IS WILLING TO BOW TO GSL DECISION BUT
IS FACING HARD LINE FROM COLOMBO CENTRAL M.P. R. PREMADASA.
PREMADASA WHO HAS ESTIMATED POTENTIAL TURNOUT FOR OCT 19
AT HALF MILLION TOLD EARLIER OPPOSITION RALLY OCT 11 TO
COURT MASS ARREST IN EVENT OF SATYAGRAHA BAN.

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3. GSL IS TAKING NO CHANCES AND PLANNING IMPLEMENT ELABORATE
POLICE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT ACCESS TO GALLE FACE GREEN AREA.
GOVT APPARENTLY WILLING USE STRONG MEASURES IN EVENT
UNP MILITANTS ATTEMPT CIRCUMVENT GSL'S BAN.
VAN HOLLEN

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